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MOSLEM GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS IN NIGERIA

I. Physical Description and Climate

Nigeria, a British Colony and Protectorate, is situated on the west coast of Africa on the shores of the Gulf of Guinea. It is located between the parallels of 4° and 14° North and is entirely within the tropics. Its area (including the adjacent British-administered Cameroons) is approximately 372,000 square miles. The greatest length of Nigeria, from west to east, is more than 700 miles and its greatest width, from north to south, exceeds 650 miles; the coast-line is over 500 miles long.

The main physical feature of Nigeria is, of course, the great river from which it takes its name. The Niger rises in the mountains of French West Africa near Sierrra Leone and to the north of Liberia about 150 miles from the sea and flows generally north-eastward to Timbulctn, in the French Sudan. From this point it flows eastward for about 200 miles and then flows in a south-easterly direction to Lokoja, about 340 miles from the sea. Here it is joined, on its left bank, by its principal tributary, the Benae, and from here it flows due south to a point a few miles below Abo, where the delta commences. This delta extends along the coast for more than 100 miles and for about 140 miles inland. The length of the Niger is 2,600 miles, of which about two-thirds lie in French territory.

Both the Niger and the Benae are greatly affected by the rainfall, a difference of as much as 35 feet between high and low water being recorded. At high water the rivers form wide, navigable waterways, several miles in width from bank to bank, but in the dry season they shrink considerably, exposing large sandbanks which divide the shrunken rivers into several channels. Owing to the widely separated localities in which they rise, the influence

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of the rainfall is felt at different times by the two rivers; the upper Niger rises in June, but below Timbuktu it reaches its maximum in January and lowest point in April, with a slight temporary rise in August; the Benue is at its lowest in March and April, when it can be forded at several places, and its highest in August and September. Below the confluence the influence of both streams is felt; the lowest water is in April and May, by the middle of August the water is rising rapidly and the highest point is reached in September; the river begins to sink again in October and there is a slight temporary rise in January.

The chief watersheds of the country are formed by the Ondo Lills, which separate the rivers flowing southwards into the Lajos lagoon from the Niger system; the hills which separate the Niger and Cross river systems; and the Bauchi plateau. From the last named, rivers run south-west, south-east, and north-east; of these the most important are the Kaduna, flowing into the Niger, the Gonjola, flowing to the Benue, and the parent streams of the Yobe, which flows into Lake Chad.

Lake Chad is on the north-east border of Nigeria and a portion of its area lies within the boundary; the lake receives the waters of the Yobe and of the Shari, which enters it from the east and, although there is no visible outlet the lake is obviously drying up, probably from evaporation. It is not unlikely that Lake Chad was at one time connected with the Benue, and it was probably owing to a belief in this that the Benue was known for some while as the Chadda.

As might be expected, there is a very considerable difference between the dry, sandy country in the North of Nigeria and the low-lying, swampy coast. Both parts are hot, but while the heat of the north is dry, that of the south is damp and enervating. The seasons are, however governed not by temperature but by

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rainfall, and there are only two seasons, which are, as a rule, well defined. The "dry" season begins in the north in October and ends in April, while in the south it is of shorter duration and at Lagos generally lasts from November to March. It is characterized by the Harmattan, a dry, northeasterly wind, which brings along with it a thick haze composed of minute particles of dust and shell from the Sahara. During the Harmattan the nights and early mornings are cold, but the days are very hot, and it is during this period that the maximum diurnal variations of temperature occur, a variation of as much as 50° being recorded within a few hours. It is in the north that the Harmattan is most severe, and it has been found that the difference in range between the maximum and minimum temperature is greater in proportion to the distance of a station from the coast. At the end of the "dry season" numerous tornadoes herald the approach of the "rainy season." Before a tornado the air is oppressively close and heavy, but the tornado itself, which is generally scarcely more than a heavy squall, lasts but a short while, and is accompanied and followed by a thunderstorm and rain.

The rainy season lasts until October, with a slight break in August, and is followed by another short tornado season. In the south the prevailing wind during the rainy season is from the south-west, and with it comes the rain which is remarkably heavy along the coast and decreases rapidly as it travels inland. At Akassa, Bonny, Forcados, and Brass the average annual rainfall exceeds 150 inches, at Calabar it is about 120 inches, and at Lagos over 70 inches; all of these towns are situated on the coast. At the inland towns of Ilorin, Likoja, and Ibi the average rainfall is between 40 and 50 inches, while in the extreme north, at Sokoto and Maidugari, the average is under 28 inches. That the distinction between the "dry season" and the "rainy season" is a

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very real one will be seen from the fact that at Maidugan not an inch of rain was recorded for the 37 years 1914-51 during the five months November to March; at Bonny, where the average rainfall is 172 inches, over 141 inches fell during the seven months May to November. June and July are generally the wettest months of the year.

The lowest mean temperature is recorded in July and August, and the lowest minimum temperature in December and January, during the prevalence of the Harmattan; the highest temperatures, both mean and maximum, are, as a rule, recorded in March and April. The temperature never rises as high on the coast as it does in the north of Nigeria, but the humidity of the air causes a damp and enervating heat which is more unpleasant than the greater but drier heat of the interior. The annual mean temperature in Lagos is approximately 80°, the absolute minimum about 60° and the absolute maximum 95°; at Maidujari the absolute minimum was about 43° and the absolute maximum 109°.

Frost is occasionally experienced in the neighborhood of Lake Chad, and hailstones have been recorded.

That Nigeria is an unhealthy country cannot be denied, and the mortality among the Europeans who first visited the country, justified the title of "the white man's grave" which is shared with other parts of West Africa. Even among the natives of the country there is an excessive amount of disease and an unreasonably high rate of mortality. The forests and swamps of the south are naturally more unhealthy than the open country of the north and the stronger tribes have usurped the better lands and driven the weaker peoples down into the less healthy but less accessible forests.

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II. Population

The African population of Nigeria, estimated at over 31,000,000 is divided into numerous tribes, great and small, speaking different languages, worshipping various gods, and differing one from another in manners and customs. Of the origin of these people little is known. Their ancestors have left them practically no written records or monuments, are fragmentary and in many cases conflicting. Wave after wave of invasion appears to have swept over the country, and the weaker tribes have been driven back and scattered by successive conquerors. Although in the rugged fastness of the Bauchi plateau some of the aboriginal inhabitants have taken refuge and seen the waves of conquest surround and pass them by, for the most part the fugitives have been pressed southwards into the dense forests and swampy country along the coast, leaving to the more virile races the open and healthier plains of the north.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, when the interior of Nigeria first became known to Europeans, the open country had been for some time the home of Negroid and Berber peoples who had adopted the Mohammedan religion and formed powerful and comparatively civilized states. In the forest and mountain country, on the other hand, there dwelt a number of Negro tribes, the people of which were rude savages, addicted to cannibalism and human sacrifice, and with a few exceptions with no highly organized form of government. On the Bauchi plateau and in its immediate vicinity, within an area of less than 25,000 square miles, there were over 100 small tribes, and between the Benue and the sea there were nearly 100 more. The broken country afforded them a measure of protection from their stronger neighbors, but even in these wild regions there was little security for life or property.

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Constant warfare raged and thousands perished annually in slave raids, the captives being often utilized to provide the victims of a sacrifice or for a cannibal feast. In such circumstances it is little wonder that these people were unable to raise themselves from barbarism, and that the comparatively few years of ordered British administration have not yet outweighed the centuries of chaos that preceded them.

Numerically, the most important tribe in the Yoruba, which with its various offshoots probably included over 5,000,000 persons. The country now occupied by the Yorubas lies between the Lagos lagoon on the south and the Niger on the north, and between the Dahomey frontier to the west and the Bini country to the east. Of the origin of the Yorubas there is no definite knowledge. Their myths give to ~~XXX~~ Ife the honor of being the spot where God created man, both white and black, and there can be little doubt that Ife was the first settlement of the Yorubas in their present country. Ife remains to this day the spiritual headquarters of the race, and the sword of state has to be brought from Ife for the coronation of the Alafin of Oyo and some of the other Yoruba "kings." There is the usual claims that the Yorubas came originally from Mecca, but to many Africans Mecca merely represents the East, and the tradition does not necessarily involve a suggestion that they sprang from the holy city of Islam. A further tradition that they came from Upper Egypt has better foundations; certain carved stones found at Ife, the manner in which the dead are bound for burial, and the kind of cloth used for this purpose, are supposed to indicate an Egyptian origin. Whatever their origin, it is probable that the Yorubas were not originally of Negro blood, although, in the centuries during which they have occupied their present territories they have so intermarried with Negro slaves as to have lost their early characteristics.

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If the origin of the Yorubas is doubtful, it is at anyrate clear that they were established in the country where they now live at a fairly early date.

Owing to the sanctity which was supposed to attach to the person of the king, it was impossible for any of his subjects to lay violent hands upon him, but no doubt a king refusing to commit suicide would have been dealt with in a suitable manner. To preserve respect for the monarchy and to avoid any chance of that familiarity which breeds contempt, the kings were not allowed to appear in public except on very special occasions, and some of the Yorubas chiefs wear bead veils to this day to hide their faces from the vulgar eye. But there was another reason why the kings were not allowed to appear in public; according to Yoruba etiquette, whenever a chief left his house he had to be followed by all his subordinates and, should a king go out, the normal life of the capital would be arrested as the whole population would be required to attend their sovereign.

In the old days the kings and members of the royal families shamelessly abused their positions and trampled on the liberties of the people, but in spite of this there were some who administered a crude form of justice which, peculiar as it may appear to our eyes, apparently satisfied their subjects. An instance has been given of a prince who fought with a commoner and cut off one of his fingers. This being reported to his father, the latter severely reprimanded the prince and was determined to exact a full retaliation for the deed. But the constitution of the country forbade him to disfigure a prince, so he ordered someone to be brought from the family of his mother as substitute. A young virgin was met in the house beating corn, and she was summoned to the palace. The king ordered the executioner to lop off the same finger of the young woman as that which the prince cut off from the man's hand. This was done instantly. Then said the king to her "It is not my fault, it is your cousin who deprived you of your finger."

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That was his rude idea of justice. As that young woman and all the relations of the prince's mother enjoy great advantages under his auspices, so they should be ready to suffer for his crimes.

Although Mohammedanism and Christianity have been making progress in Yorubaland for a great many years, the people are still mainly pagan. They believe in the existence of a Supreme Being, whom they term Oloxun (the owner of the sky), but they consider Him too important and remote to be much concerned with the affairs of mankind. There are, however, a number of minor deities (Orishas) who are more directly interested in mundane matters, and frequent sacrifices are offered to these. They believe in a future state and also in the transmigration of souls, children frequently receiving the names of ancestors who are supposed to be reborn in them. The spirits of the departed are worshipped in different ways, chiefly through the medium of the priests of the Egugun or Adamuorisho societies, while the oro, whatever its earlier significance, is now mainly a means of keeping the female portion of the population in a state of proper subservience to the stronger sex. A loud wailing noise, created by a flat piece of stick carved in a peculiar way being whirled round the head at the end of a piece of string, is the signal that the oro is aboard, and that all women must conceal themselves on pain, in former years, of death, and nowadays, of a severe beating.

No less than nine of the ten largest towns in Nigeria today are inhabited by Yorubas. The largest is Ibadan, with a population of over 460,000, and the next in size is Lagos, the population of which is 272,000. Lagos is the capital and principal port of the country, and indeed, of West Africa. Up to comparatively recent times Lagos was little more than a mud-bank in the lagoon which bears its name.

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Spread over a large area of northern Nigeria are the Hausa-speaking tribes, all more or less of Negroid origin. For many years the Hausas were considered to be a distinct race, and the name was loosely applied to all the tribes that spoke the language: many tribes now claim to be the descendents of the original X Hausa stock, but it is generally accepted that no Hausa race exists today, although the language is spoken by a great many tribes as a mother tongue and as a supplementary language to their own by many more. A comparatively easy language to acquire, it has become the lingua franca of a large part of West Africa, and it is the only language of western Africa which has been reduced to writing by the Africans themselves, modified Arabic characters being used. There is hardly a place in the northern half of Africa where no one could be found who spoke or understood the Hausa language, and Mecca, of course, would see annually many Hausa-speaking pilgrims.

The establishment of the early Hausa states must have taken place at a very remote era, and prior to the spread of Mohammedanism the people were pagan; the new religion probably entered the country during the thirteenth century and made rapid progress, affecting profoundly the social as well as the religious life of the Hausas. A form of government grew up based on the doctrines of Islam, with a well-organized fiscal system and a highly trained and learned judiciary, administering Mohammedan law with ability and integrity. Each state was ruled over by its king, assisted by the usual ministers of oriental governments, but we have little information of the actual rulers and their doings. In every instance ~~the~~ the state took its name from that of its principal city, which was surrounded by a mad wall and a deep ditch of many miles in circumference. To these cities the people would fly for refuge from an invading army and as there was space between the walls for

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many farms the cities were able to withstand prolonged sieges.

The most generally accepted theory is that which indicates that the Fulani came originally from Upper Egypt and migrated westwards across the north of Africa to the Atlantic coast, where a number settled, while others appear to have moved at a later date in an easterly direction and to have entered Nigeria during the thirteenth century. A portion of these immigrants drifted to the towns, mingling freely with the Hausa inhabitants, intermarrying with them and adopting the Mohammedan religion, and before very long their superior intelligence placed them in positions of importance. For centuries the Fulani remained in Hausaland as a more or less subject race, but in the year 1802 Othman dan Fodio, a Fulani sheikh who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca, and whose reputed sanctity had given him great influence among the faithful, interferred with the king's servants on behalf of a party of Mohammedans who were being carried off into captivity. The king was angry and sent a message to Othman demanding his presence. As he failed to appear, troops were sent to fetch him, but these were easily defeated by Othman's devoted Fulani followers, who were, however, afterwards compelled to flee with their leader to escape the king's revenge. As a general massacre of the Fulani, was now threatened, Othman raised the banner of revolt and defeated the king's forces in a decisive battle. The heads of the various Fulani clans now flocked to the successful sheikh, whom they recognized as the Sarkin masulin (Commander of the Faithful) asking his blessing and his authority to conquer the people among whom they had lived for so long on sufferance.

The jihad had commenced, Othman giving 'flags' to fourteen chiefs, who were authorized to wage war in the name of Allah and His prophet, but it was not only against pagans that the jihad was directed. Those who were suspected of being lukewarm followers

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of the Prophet were as guilty in the eyes of Othman's fanatical adherents as those who were still in darkness and their property, no less than the property of the unbelievers, was lawful spoil for triumphant virtue. Although Borau was a Mohammedan country, it was attacked and conquered in 1808, and only regained its independence by the military skill of a famous sheikh named El Kanemi. Nor were all of Fulani's followers Fulani. Many of the natives of the country, who saw in the jihad only a struggle for the preservation of their religion, joined Othman's forces against their own people, and one at least of the 'Flag-bearers' was not a Fulani. The jihad was not at first entirely successful, but it was sufficiently so for Othman to hand over the cares of state to his brother Abdullahi and his son Bello, between whom he divided the country. He himself continued to preach and study until his death in the year 1817 at his son's capital, Sokoto. Abdullahi, in the meantime, had established himself at Gando, and on Othman's death, he recognized Bello as Sarkin Musulmi, probably from necessity rather than from inclination.

This successful Fulani jihad, which began about the year 1802, had made that race the masters of Hausaland, and in 1808 the Fulani armies invaded Borhu, although it had been a Mohammedan country for centuries, and ~~against~~ jihad was supposed to be directed only against the infidel. The Bornu army was defeated, the Sultan was forced to flee from his capital, and it looked as though Bornu was to be added to the Fulani empire, when there came forward a remarkable man who was to save the country and re-establish its power. Mohammad El Kanemi was born in Fezzan, one of his parents being an Arab and the other a native of Kanemi; he had been educated in Egypt, and had already attained a great reputation in Kanemi for sanctity and learning when the Fulani invasion called him to the front. Claiming a divine inspiration, he raised a small number of fanatical followers, with whose aid he defeated the Fulani in a

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battle in which the Bornu force was at a serious numerical disadvantage. The people now flocked to his standard, and within a year he had defeated the Fulani in a series of battles and driven them from the country. Refusing the throne which his enthusiastic followers urged him to take, he restored the fugitive Sultan and did him homage, but he retained all the real power in his own hands. The puppet Sultan continued to reign nominally in his newly-built capital at Birnie, but the Shehu (sheikh) as El Kanemi was called, became the virtual ruler. On El Kanemi's death in 1835 the Sultan attempted to reassert himself and regain his lost power, but he was defeated and killed, and El Kanemi's son Omar, who had succeeded his father, became in practice as well as in theory the ruler of the country. His successors still retain the title of Shehu, which was assumed by the founder of their dynasty, in preference to that of Sultan.

The power of Bornu once more began to wave, and in 1893 Ratich, who was formerly a slave of Zobeir Pasha, led an army from the Egyptian Sudan into Bornu. Rabeh's troops were part of the force with which Zobeir had held his military district before the overthrow of the Egyptian power in the Sudan by the Mahdi, and made a well-drilled and fairly well-equipped army which defeated the Shehu's troops and destroyed Kuka.

After the adoption of the Mohammedan religion in Bornu the system of law and taxation closely approximated to that in force in Huasaland, but there existed in addition in Bornu a death duty, called gado, and a well-graduated income tax, haku limeram; at not time does there seem to have been the multiplicity of taxes and illegal imports which were so characteristic under the rule of the later Fulani Emirs.

On the last of Bornu, and in the neighborhood of Lake Chad, there is found a race of Shuwa Arabs, famous as cavalry in the armies of old Bornu, and now divided up into small clans under their

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own Sheikhs. They speak a dialect of Arabic, in which many classical words, long disused by other Arabs, are retained, mixed with words of Negro origin. They possess large herds of cattle, which are moved from place to place in search of pasturage and water.

The less advanced and organized communities are found principally among the hills of Bauchi and in that tract of country which lies east of the lower Niger and south of the Benue.

The most important of these is the large Ibo tribe, which with its various clans and offshoots probably numbers about four million persons, and occupies the greater part of the country between the Niger and the Cross rivers, together with the Asaba district on the right bank of the Niger. Among these people there was no highly organized form of government and little tribal cohesion; practically every village was independent, and so great was the isolation of each small community that the inhabitants of neighboring villages often speak in entirely different dialects. The Ibos, were, and still are, almost entirely a pagan race, and they were much addicted to cannibalism. The Aras are held by some to be a clan of the Ibo tribe, and by others to be of an entirely different stock; however that may be, the fact remains that by their superior intelligence they acquired a complete ascendancy over the neighboring Ibo clans.

North of the river Benue, in the mountainous region of the Bauchi plateau, are a large number of primitive tribes addicted to cannibalism and other unpleasant practices, and wear the scantiest of attire, in spite of the cold so often experienced in their mountainous country. As a ~~xx~~ rule the women wear nothing more than two wisps of grass, in front and behind, suspended from a string around the waist, while in some cases the men wear even less than this. They are great agriculturalists, and own some hardy ponies which they ride bareback. Their principal weapon is the bow. The poisoned arrows from which are effective up to

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a range of about 120 yards. Some are head-hunters, and preserve the skulls of their vanguard enemies. Some eat anything from rats, mice, and bats to their own deceased relatives, while others, more fastidious, will not eat their own people, but exchange corpses with neighboring villages. They are generally great drunkards, the whole tribe frequently drinking locally brewed beer until all are incapable. The largest of these tribes are the Angas and Tangale.

In addition to the tribes mentioned there are numerous others, speaking different languages and dialects, and giving other proofs of distinct origins. Some of the tribes consider the birth of twins to be lucky, others kill both the twins and the mother, believing that where two children are born at one birth one must be the child of an evil spirit. Some firmly believe in the ~~pp~~ power of certain men to change themselves into animals; some sacrifice human beings to their gods. In some tribes the men are circumcized; in others there are initiation ceremonies for boys and girls. Sometimes there are age groups, the members of which share each other's work and play. Most of the tribes have facial and bodily marks, applied either during infancy or at puberty, by incisions or tattooing; the sight of an infant with deep gashes on either cheek, deliberately kept open that a permanent scar may be left, is peculiarity revolting, but does not appear to affect the African mothers, who are in other respects most affectionate and kind to their children. It was, no doubt essential in former years that the members of each tribe should be easily identified, but the need for this has now departed, and it is to be hoped that the cruelties inseparable from the marking of children will soon disappear.

Most of the tribes which have not been reached by Christianity or Mohammedanism believe in a multitude of evil spirits, ever on the lookout for an opportunity to harm mankind, who have to be constantly placated. With many tribes the priests, or juju men, have

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to settle social and economic questions; in particular they have to decide when the yam crop is fit to be eaten (for the yam eaten too young is unwholesome), and it is said that in some cases that the date of the "festival" is fixed by the position of certain stars, which shows an elementary knowledge of astronomy.

The physique of the Negro is generally very fine, though there is often combined with a well-developed, muscular body an extremely feeble constitution which succumbs easily to disease. The practice of carrying heavy loads on the head from the days of childhood gives an upright and graceful carriage and in most of the tribes the young women have particularly graceful figures though in some parts of the country the deliberate fattening of girls before marriage spoils their appearance. Boys and girls come to puberty at a very early age, and grow old rapidly, the women particularly being pass'ee at an age when an American woman would be at the prime of life.

Among the non-native inhabitants of Nigeria there are a number of West Indians, some of whom were formerly employed by the government railroad, and the descendants of liberated Negro-slaves from Brazil, some thousands of whom returned to the country of their origin and settled in Lagos after it became a British colony. A number of people also came from Sierra Leone in 1842 and settled at Abeokuta. There are some Tripoli Arabs resident in Kano, and there is an increasing number of Syrians in Lagos, who carry on an extensive trade in a quiet way, making money and keeping it by the simple process of spending as little as possible. There are no European settlers in the country and it is unlikely that there will ever be a permanent resident white population. The absence of white settlers has saved the Government of Nigeria from the difficult problems which confront other administrations in Africa. The Europeans in Nigeria number about 15,000, of whom some 5,000 are resident in Lagos. They are principally employed in the government service, in banks and commercial companies, and as

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missionaries. A very large proportion is British. Except for the missionaries, the others seldom remain in the country for morethan eighteen months or two year at a time.

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III. Religion

The greater number of pure Negro inhabitants of Nigeria are pagans, while among the Negroid and Berber tribes of the North the majority are Mohammedans. Christianity has made slow progress in the country save in the comparatively few localities where missionaries have worked for long periods.

In considering the pagan beliefs of the people it is important to realize that the existence of a Supreme Being is appreciated practically throughout the country, even by the most backward tribes. This Supreme Being, however, is invisible and remote, and little likely to interfere much in the petty concerns of the individual and therefore, although He is not forgotten, more attention is paid to minor deities, good and evil, who are considered to have a greater interest in human affairs. But even these are held to be spirits, and the images which the people venerate are but the representations of the spirits and not the gods themselves. In most cases there is a tribal god, a lesser god for each village of the tribe, a household god for every family in the village, and a personal god for every member of the family. Add to these a god or devil for every striking object of nature, for every river or stream, for every hill or grove, and for every large or remarkable tree, and it will be understood how complicated is the Africans' mythology.

Although the change is slow, it is unquestionable that paganism is gradually yielding in Nigeria to the influence of Islam and Christianity, partly no doubt because of the influence of the social and political advantages of these religions. It is estimated that in Negro Africa, where Christian and Moslem missionaries are in competition, ten heathen embrace the doctrine of Islam for every one who becomes a Christian. For this there are many reasons. To begin with, although there is little love lost between the different Moslem sects, to the heathen Islam presents a united front, while sectarian differences tend to weaken the Christian force and puzzle the pagan mind. Again, the doctrines of Mohammed are spread by Africans who can penetrate freely into any part of the country and get in touch with the people, while Christianity is generally preached by European missionaries who have not this advantage. Moreover, every Moslem proselizes as a matter of course; the Christian leaves this to his priests.

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The chief reason for the greater success of Islam is, however, that it is better adapted than Christianity to the African life. The native of Nigeria, as he advances in knowledge and becomes more civilized, ceases to believe in the numberless gods of his pagan ancestors and looks around for something better. There is offered to him the choice of the Cross or the Crescent. Both involve strange doctrines which he scarcely understands, but while one forbids him to possess more than one wife, the other imposes no such restriction. Polygamy is an old established custom throughout Nigeria, and to the African it appears not only a reasonable but almost an essential institution. The number of a man's wives provides an indication of his wealth, in which from it is often entirely invested, and the labor of his wives adds to his income and permits of further investments. Children are not a financial burden in West Africa, but add to the wealth of the father, so there is no economic disadvantage in large families. Daughters are easily marketable as wives at an early age, and sons provide an unpaid labor supply. But apart from the financial advantages of a plurality of wives, there is the fact that mothers in most parts of Nigeria nurse their children till they are from two to three years of age, and deny themselves to their husbands during this period. With monogamy the rule, such a custom might in time disappear, but it appears at present to be an insuperable difficulty.

Mohammedanism has existed in the north of Nigeria for many centuries, and was certainly introduced before the year 1400. It was adopted by the town-living Fulani some time after their arrival in Hausaland, and under the inspired leadership of Othman dan Fodio, with the cooperation of their fanatical neighbors, they were able early in the nineteenth century to overthrow the pagan state of Gobis and to subdue those Mohammedan cities which conformed too laxly to the rules of the Prophet. Using their religious zeal as a cloak to their ambition, the Fulani leaders waged endless war against the pagan tribes. "God has given me all the land of the infidels," said Sultan Bells in 1824, and with this comforting knowledge he acquired as much of the infidels' territories as he could. But not only against the infidel did Bells fight. Borau

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had been a Mohammaden state for centuries when it was invaded by the Fulani, and even when the "Servant of God." Mohammed El Kauemi, a man of unquestioned sanctity and austerity, had driven the invaders from Borau and abolished the abuses of the past, wars between the Fulani and the Boraue were always breaking out.

With the establishment of the British administration the spread of Islam by force of arms was put a stop to, but it has not ceased to spread by more peaceful means. Today more than half the inhabitants of Lugus are Moslems, and elsewhere the religion is gaining ground rapidly. The statement has been made in the past that the Nigerian Government prevented Christian missions from operating in the Modammedan Emirates, and that Christian missionaries had been excluded from pagan areas to which the preachers of Islam had been admitted. This was met by the agreement that the British administration gave a solemn promise to the people when British rule was extended to the north that the Mohammedan religion would not be interfered with and that all men would be free to worship God as they chose.

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British administration in Nigeria did not formally commence until 1861, the year that Lagos was ceded to the crown. For many centuries before then, however, modern Nigeria had been subjected to external influences from the large medieval kingdoms of the Western Sudan (Ghana, Melle, and Songhai), from the Maghrib and Tripolitania, and from Egypt via Lake Chad and the Nile-Niger traverse. The important immigrations of Northern Nigerian groups (Gulani, Hausa, Kanuri) were directly connected with disturbances resulting from the spread of Islam in Egypt and North Africa after the seventh century. The empires of Melk and Songhai were Islamic, the rulers having been converted to Islam in the middle of the eleventh century. In 1493 a Negro (Mohammel Askia) seized the throne of the Empire of Songhai, and during the succeeding two centuries most of the Housa States were brought within that empire. In the meantime, Katsina and Kano had become famous as centers of Islam, and Kano emerged as a great commercial entreport. Historically and culturally, the Muslim areas of Northern Nigeria belong to the Western Sudan.

Until the arrival of the British, Northern Nigeria was economically oriented toward Tripoli and Egypt. Kano was famous throughout and beyond the Sudan for the weaving and embroidery of cloths, the tanning of skins, and ornamental leatherwork. The latter product, known as "Morocco leather," was exported across the Sahara to North African ports; the caravans brought back to Kano European trade goods, mostly cloth, metal articles, and glass. The outstanding economic development in Northern Nigeria since the British occupation has been the virtual cessation of this historic trans-Saharan trade, and the diversion of export products to the Guinea coast as a result of the imposition of an artificial frontier above Kano and the development of a modern transportation system within Nigeria.

Islam was firmly established in Northern Nigeria by the end of the fifteenth century, and its effects were profound. Although Islam, like Catholicism, is not necessarily conservative, the political elite which emerged in Northern Nigeria used certain interpretations of Islam to

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impose centralized government and a rigid class hierarchy and to inculcate habits and attitudes of political deference and subordination. The Hausa language absorbed hundreds of words of Arabic origin and was adopted to Arabic script. Islam provided a transtribal bond which has been one of the most powerful integrative factors in Northern Nigeria. It also provides a link with the modern Middle East, as evidenced by the thousands of pilgrims who travel from Northern Nigeria to Mecca each year, and by the growing contacts with the Sudan, Egypt, and other Muslim countries.

These early influences from the Maghreb and North Africa were not restricted exclusively to the north. In a diluted form they filtered down into the more physically accessible parts of Yombaland. Today there are as many Yomba Moslems as Christians, although Yombaland has been subjected to intensive Christian evangelization for more than a century. Some authorities believe that certain Yomba and Edo cultural traits can be traced with certainty to Egypt: the divinity of kings, ceremonies of reinvestiture and rejuvenation, and beliefs similar to the Egyptian ka. The spread of Islam was halted, however, wherever the rain forest became dense and inhospitable. Environmental factors, among others, prevented the southeastern part of Nigeria from feeling its impact.

During the fifteenth century, when Islam was consolidating its hold over Northern Nigeria, the impact of the export slave trade, commenced by Portugal, was being felt in the south. By 1455 more than 700 slaves were being shipped annually to Portugal from the west coast of Africa; and under the inspiration and guidance of Henry the Navigator the whole of the Guinea coast was known by 1500. Portuguese traders and missionaries briefly visited Benin City in the 1480's, and from the latter part of the fifteenth century they exercised an appreciable influence in the Hsekiri Kingdom of Warri.

During the three centuries following 1500 most of the leading European nations participated in the slave trade, which became lucrative after the discovery of America and the establishment of Spanish colonies in the West Indies had created a heavy demand for slaves. In 1712 the British secured a virtual monopoly over slave dealing on the West Coast. A century later, in 1807, Great Britain declared the slave trade illegal.

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British abolition produced no revolutionary change, however, because foreign slave dealers, mainly Portuguese, rushed in to fill the vacuum. In fact, the trade actually increased, and was not finally ended until the mid-1840's.

European slave dealers had no strong incentive to explore the Nigeria hinterland, and few of them left their vessels. Procurement of the slaves was left to African enterprise. Chiefs and African slave traders readily undertook the role of middleman and brought the slaves to shipside in exchange for European trinkets. Thus they acquired a vested interest in the slave traffic and were as much aggrieved by its cessation and their consequent displacement as were the white slave dealers. The first Nigerian middle class was liquidated by the abolition of the external slave trade.

Nigeria was known as the "Slave Coast" until the middle of the nineteenth century. Its people felt the brunt of four centuries of European-African contact resulting from the traffic in slaves. Africanisms traceable to Yoruba culture have been found in Negro communities in Brazil, the West Indies, and elsewhere in the New World. Many of the Creoles of Freetown, Sierra Leone, are descendants of early Yoruba freed slaves. The total effect of the slave trade upon Nigerian society, institutions, and peoples will perhaps never be known. Certain general effects are obvious. The trade was one of the main causes of the devastating internecine strife that prevailed in southern Nigeria during the centuries preceding abolition. Not only were tribal institutions disorganized, but the energies and talents of the people were consumed either by raiding or being raided in order to meet the great demands for slaves. Hundreds of thousands of the most virile members of their race were physically withdrawn from African society over a period of 400 years. The same period saw Europe emerge from medieval stagnation and pass through her agricultural, industrial, and intellectual revolutions.

The slave trade not only profoundly affected institutions, but it left a psychological legacy of suspicion, servility, or hostility which has been that the slave trade is the main explanation for their so-called primitiveness. They bitterly resent the stigma of inferiority implicit in the fact that their race was once a race of slaves. They feel that they were victims of history, held back while others were advancing.

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After the British government had declared the slave trade illegal in 1807, European traders were compelled to turn to legitimate trade in such commodities as palm oil and ivory. The adjustment was made quickly, however, and as early as 1826 twelve British merchant ships were reported to be in the Bonny River at one time. The discovery in 1830 that the Niger entered the Bight of Biafra served as an invitation for traders to penetrate the hinterland. During the succeeding seventy years the trade in Nigerian products grew very rapidly and was conducted first by private European traders and companies, and later (1886-1900) by the chartered Royal Niger Company. The Berlin Conference of 1885 acknowledged British claims to the Niger Basin, and Britain gave the Royal Niger Company power "to administer, make treaties, levy customs and trade in all territories in the basin of the Niger and its affluents." Armed with this mandate the company in the next fifteen years established a firm monopoly over all trade in the Niger Basin. In 1900 the British Government took over from the Royal Niger Company, and Sir Frederick Lugard, as high commissioner, proclaimed the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria.

In the meantime, British trading interests along the coast had secured sufficient political support from a reluctant home government to have a British consul appointed in 1849. Stationed on the Spanish island of Fernando Pa, the consul was charged with supervising trading activities in the Bight of Benin and Biafra. In 1872 certain judicial and administrative powers were conferred upon him, including the levying of fines and the taking of punitive measures against Africans who resisted "peaceful" commerce. In 1885 Britain, when given a clear hand at the Berlin Conference, formally declared the Niger Delta area, over which the consul had been exercising limited powers, the Oil Rivers Protectorate. During the next seven years an armed constabulary was raised, armed launches were secured, and consuls and vice-consuls were appointed to the various rivers over which they were given control by the commissioner and consul-general at old Culabar. Finally, in 1893, Britain extended the protectorate over the hinterland and renamed it the Niger Coast Protectorate.

More than three decades earlier, in 1861, the British government had

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annexed the settlement of Lagos as a colony, ostensibly for the purpose of stopping the slave trade. For twenty years this famous slave mart was successively under the jurisdiction of the governor of the West Africa Settlements, resident in Sierra Leone (1866-1874), and the governor of the Gold Coast Colony (1874-1886). Lagos was finally severed from the Gold Coast (now Ghana) in the same year that the Royal Niger Company was given its charter and the Oil Rivers Protectorate was established. In 1900 the Niger Coast Protectorate became the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, and six years later it was amalgamated with Lagos under the title of the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. Finally, in 1914, the two protectorates (northern and southern) were amalgamated to form the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria.

The Federation of Nigeria, which now is composed of three regions and the UN Trust territory of the British Cameroons, is rapidly moving toward independence. Two things are certain: The UK will carry out its promise to grant independence, and Nigerians of all regions and parties are agreed on demanding complete independence for the Federation by 1960. Nonetheless, the ethnic, tribal, religious, political, economic, and geographical divisions of Nigerian life tend to favor regionalism and have until recently raised the specter of a Balkanized Nigeria. This, perhaps, has, at least for the present, been largely dissipated by the enticing example of an independent, neighboring Ghana. There are, however, likely to be sharp conflicts still about many problems, particularly the distribution of power between federal and regional governments, the allocation of revenues, and the relative influence of tribal, feudal, and secular groups in the new state.

The Northern Region, covering two-thirds of the land area and containing over half of the total population is predominantly Moslem with an Animist minority; the Western Region contains Christians, Moslems, and Animists in almost equal portions; the Eastern Region is primarily Christian and Animist.

The political development of Nigeria has been profoundly affected by the trepartition of Nigerian life. The Nationalist movement, originating in the economically more advanced coastal regions, has split between the Ibo and the Yoruba, and each has served as the focal point

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of a major political party. In the Eastern Region the recognized prime move of Nigerians nationalism, Dr. Nuamdi Azikine, leads the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons. Immensely popular among the Ibo, and a clever though somewhat unscrupulous politician, "Zik" has made inroads into other regions and tribal groups. In the Western Region, the Yoruba Chief Obafemi Awolowo leads the Action Group, a party he originally established to protect the region from political incursions of the militant National Council. Both the National Council and the Action Group have succeeded, however, in establishing themselves in each other's strongholds, a fact which mitigates the original trend toward one-party rule in the regions and also, in the long run, may help to break down the rigid regional nature of Nigerian politics.

The situation in the Northern Region differs sharply from that in the Eastern and Western Regions. The Northern Region has long been governed by the British through "indirect rule," a system whereby they relied upon the traditional local authorities, here the Emirs, to serve as their agents in governing. The North, led by the Sardauna of Sokoto, is still in the grip of traditional groups, which are reluctant to permit the unfettered growth of democratic politics. No party in opposition of the Northern People's Congress - a political organization controlled by the Emirs - had been able to obtain a seat in the legislature until the regional elections of late 1956.

The Federal Prime Minister, Alhaji Abubakas Tafawa Balewa, of the Northern People's Congress, is a Moslem.

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